

AMENDED MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Tuesday, September 8, 2009
Council Chambers
Municipal Building
93 Cottage Street
Bar Harbor, Maine

I. *Call to Order at 2:05 by the Chair, Patricia Samuel.*

Members present: Patricia Samuel, Chair; John Kelly, Mark Hanscom; James “Howdy” Houghton; Matt Horton; Barry Teater.

Also present: Anne Krieg, Planning Director; Lauren Suerth, Planning Intern; Brian Madigan, Staff Planner; Carole Beal, property owner and local artist.

II. *Excused Absences*

Chris Fogg was excused from the meeting.

III. *Minutes*

Matt Horton moved to approve the minutes as distributed. John Kelly seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion.

IV. *Regular Business*

A. *Economic Development Plan – update of progress*

Anne Krieg had Lauren Suerth give the update since she is conducting the space utilization survey. Lauren described the surveying process, and the progress she has made.

Lauren asked the Task Force whether they would like her to gather information on employee housing, specifically large single family homes that have been converted into such use. She also asked that if they would like her to survey this type of land use and what information they would like her to gather.

Howdy Houghton said that he would like to know housing demographics in order to track changes over time.

Barry Teater suggested that Lauren could expedite the gathering of demographic information by talking with local employers that are known to have employee housing.

Patricia Samuel asked Anne when the consultants from Planning Decisions were coming back, and the status of space utilization surveys for the other villages. Anne said that they will return in November to present a rough draft of the economic development plan to the Task Force. She said that the other villages will be surveyed after the downtown study area is complete.

Mark Hanscom asked Anne and Lauren how often they communicate with the consultants. Both Anne and Lauren described the nature and frequency of their communication with the consultants.

Howdy asked how the data for the list of major employers in Bar Harbor was derived. He said that he is concerned about the accuracy of the number of employees listed for several employers. He also said that the commercial fishing industry should be its own category.

Howdy said that fishing is an important job source for local people.

Patricia said that she would like to know what Bar Harbor residents do for work.

Mark described residential turnover rates associated with the different economic sectors in Bar Harbor.

B. Update of Downtown development district project

Anne said that she is working on a draft for the Task Force to review at their next meeting. She will send the draft to Patricia for her review before it is sent to the Task Force.

C. Update of Eden Street Corridor Project

Brian Madigan introduced himself as well as the project to the Task Force. He provided a history of the project within the context of a recent Planning Board application and the Comprehensive Plan.

Brian described the format and goals of the neighborhood meeting that was held at the Municipal Building on August 18, 2009. He stated the outcomes of the meeting, which, he explained, are also identified in the staff report that was sent to the Task Force in their homework packet.

Brian stated that he was attending the Task Force meeting to discuss the outcomes of the neighborhood meeting, and get feedback on the proposed district changes. He outlined the discussion questions for the Task Force.

Matt Horton asked what spurred the redistricting initiative.

Anne said that even though the issue was recently brought up by the Jordan Fernald Funeral Home, the redistricting is also identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Matt Horton said that he agrees with designating West Street as a historic district, and using it to limit commercial uses on that street. He also said that he does not see a problem with the Eden Street Corridor designation, and its commercial nature.

Patricia said that the amount of traffic on West Street is a problem. She also identified properties that do not follow the Land Use Ordinance that limits the number of people living in a house to five unrelated individuals. She said that enforcement is the main issue with this regulation.

Howdy asked whether the property owners or the building occupants were notified about the neighborhood meeting. Anne said that the property owners

were notified, and explained the administrative problems with notifying occupants versus property owners.

John Kelly asked how staff drew the boundary lines for the land use changes. Anne said that the Planning Department was trying to get the widest scope and perspective on the issues as possible.

Patricia informed the Task Force that she was a facilitator for small group discussions at the neighborhood meeting. She identified two major issues that were addressed at the meeting. First, the Harbor Lane neighborhood did not want to be part of the West Street zoning regulations. Second, property owners cited the detrimental effects of bed and breakfasts and employee housing on the quality of neighborhoods.

Patricia said she believes there should be a land use ordinance mandating that bed and breakfasts located in the West Street Historic District be owner occupied.

Matt asked how many rental rooms are allowed in bed and breakfasts in the Downtown Residential zone. He said that downtown neighborhoods are already deteriorating.

Anne said that bed and breakfasts located in the Downtown Residential zone are allowed to rent thirteen rooms. She said that this ordinance was controversial when created, however the impact of bed and breakfasts on the quality of neighborhoods is now viewed as benign.

John asked how staff determined the boundaries for the Eden Street Corridor; specifically he asked why it was not on both sides of the street.

Matt said that he thinks the Corridor should extend along Eden Street to Highbrook Road.

Anne explained the purpose of the corridor based on the results from the Neighborhood meeting. She said that the Task Force needs to determine whether the area along Eden Street is a visual gateway, or a visual and land use gateway.

John said that based on the existing conditions of the area and the information provided, he is not sure that the intent of the Eden Street Corridor will be achieved by extending the district.

Howdy said that most of the area that has been added to the Eden Street Corridor is open land that is not suitable for development, and the only property use that is likely to change in that area is the Jordan Fernald Funeral Home property.

Patricia reminded the Task Force that they need to think about the long term use of properties.

Matt asked what the Eden Street Corridor designation would do. Anne said that according to the Comprehensive Plan, it is a gray area. She explained that the area is visually defined as the entry point into the downtown community, but

according to the Zoning and Future Land Use Map it is defined by multiple districts. She informed the Task Force that the Comprehensive Plan does not provide zoning recommendations.

Carole Beal said that she views the area as a gateway to the school, because of Kids Corner and the elementary school.

Matt identified several services the Town has implemented to increase child safety along Eden Street.

Barry said that he views Eden Street as a visual gateway because almost everyone who goes to Bar Harbor must drive along that street.

John said that there should be more direction as you approach the West/ Eden Street and Cottage/ Eden Street intersections. He also suggested that the Town enact a scenic conservation easement along the corridor to keep the area green.

Patricia said that the Task Force needs to make recommendations to Planning Board regarding their discussion.

Matt said that he is not ready to make recommendations, and would like more time to review the material. Mark agreed.

John said that the Task Force needs to visualize how the area should look and define the area before they make recommendations.

Anne said that the Task Force can make recommendations to the Planning Board at their next meeting. She said that Staff will provide the Task Force with a decision tree series of questions in order to guide their discussion.

Brian said that the members can reference Appendix A from the staff report as questions to think about.

Brian asked whether the Task Force thinks it is okay to have residential along Route 3. Matt said that it is important to maintain existing residential uses. The Task Force agreed.

Brian asked whether the New Village district should allow commercial uses. Matt and Howdy said that the area currently has hotels and motels, but the district should not allow more commercial uses.

Anne asked what should happen to the 'Summit House' (103-007-001). Howdy said that he would like to see the building as co-op housing. Mark said that the property is on the market and is priced as a high-end commercial property.

D. Other Task Force comments

Mark requested that Task Force meeting packets be sent out earlier than the Friday before the meeting.

Matt suggested the packets be distributed electronically to save paper and postage. The Task Force agreed. Anne Krieg said that she will change the packet distribution process accordingly.

Patricia asked for input from the Task Force for her progress check-in with the Town Council. She said that she will accept suggestions sent by e-mail until the

date of the Council meeting.

V. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VI. Matters for Next Meetings

Economic Development Plan: update of progress

Update of Downtown Development District Project

Recommendations to Planning Board for Eden Street Corridor Project

VII. Confirm Date/Time/Location for Next Meeting

September 22, 2009 at 2:00 PM.

VIII. Adjournment at 3:30 PM.

These minutes were prepared by Planning Department Intern, Lauren Suerth for presentation at the September 22, 2009, Economic Development Task Force Meeting.

Barry Teater
Economic Development Task Force Secretary

Date